

## Dragonshards

# The Daughters of Sora Kell, Part 1

By Keith Baker



*The walls of the chamber were studded with skulls. They were the only source of light in the vast cavern, a hundred skulls glowing like coals in a fading fire. Daine remembered the stories he'd heard as a child, how Sora Maenya would trap the souls of those she devoured. He saw a child's skull peering from a crack in the wall and cursed the gods that would allow such horrors to exist.*

*"Sweet, she was." The voice was the rasp of steel against the whetstone, soft and harsh.*

*A grove of darkwood oaks stood in the center of the cavern. Now Daine saw the three women standing amidst the trees. The speaker was tall and dark, her limbs as gnarled as the dead trees around her, her leather jerkin the color of dried blood. Her companion was an elf-maiden with snow-white skin and glittering blue eyes, a cascade of midnight hair framing her perfect features; though he knew it was an illusion, Daine still felt his heart skip a beat. A third figure watched from the shadows, red eyes peering from the deep hood of her gray robe.*

*"Greetings, traveler," the elf-maid said, and her voice was honey and song. "You have traveled far to reach this place. Wolf and worg, briar and bog, a path long and hard."*

*"Doomed and done," the giantess growled.*

*"Just begun," the graycloak whispered.*

*Daine dropped to one knee. "My ladies," he began, but the elf-maid stopped him with a raised hand. Her features slowly shifted. Now she was human, with eyes like emeralds and hair the color of fire.*

*"We know your purpose, child. My sister speaks of you often. You seek the Blade of Dol Azur. And we can grant your desire. But first you must fulfill ours."*

## The Three Sisters

Every child in Aundair is raised on tales of the terrible Sora Maenya, and any Brelish bard can sing a dozen songs about the fools who thought to match wits with Sora Katya. Few people believed these myths, and no one expected these hags to emerge at the head of an army of war trolls and skullcrusher ogres -- a power unseen in the west since the time of Dhakaan. Within a decade the hags established control over the lands beneath the Byeshk Mountains, bringing order to the region for the first time in seven thousand years.

Many questions linger over this newborn nation of Droaam. For centuries the hags were content to lurk in waste, wood, and swamp. What caused them to leave their haunts and claim a kingdom? Do they intend to extend their control beyond the Graywall mountains and claim human subjects, or is a nation of monsters all that they desire? Is a nation their only desire, or is it only the first step in a far greater scheme?

Individually, the Daughters of Sora Kell are three of the most powerful beings on Khorvaire. Sora Maenya and Sora Katya are monsters of legend, and this should be taken into account when dealing with them. They have faced and defeated the champions of centuries past and will not be easily impressed or intimidated. Through Sora Teraza, they already know much about the adventurers before they ever encounter them; a DM should make full use of this knowledge.

There are many ways to involve the Daughters in a campaign, and many of them don't involve fighting with the player characters. Sora Teraza is one of the most gifted oracles of the age, and the party may need her mystical insights. Sora Katya is engaged in schemes stretching across Khorvaire, and the party may get caught up in the machinations of Daask or House Tharashk's dealings with the hag. The hags possess many forgotten secrets and ancient treasures plucked from the depths of the Demon Wastes and the ruins of the Dhakaani Empire. They are often willing to bargain with adventurers, trading treasures for services or making potentially deadly wagers. The tales of Sora Katya are full of seeming triumphs that turn to disaster. Through Sora Teraza, the Daughters know much of the future, so that a seeming victory over them may have long-term consequences the adventurers didn't anticipate and which can transform what seemed like success into a hollow victory or worse. Perhaps the Blade of Dol Azur will allow you to kill Haskalask the Black, but perhaps that's just what the Daughters want.

What few people realize is that the Daughters are not simply hags: they are half-fiends. Their mother, Sora Kell, is a powerful night hag, though the fathers of the crones have been lost to legend. The Daughters do not have wings, but they possess all other half-fiend traits and abilities. When using *summon monster IX*, a Daughter can summon a only night hag, and they call on this power only as a last resort.

Should a party end up in battle with the Daughters of Sora Kell, the DM must remember that they are cunning, selfish, dangerous foes with well-developed sense of self-preservation. Each has survived fights with hundreds of heroes, great and small. Even Sora Maenya won't fight to the last breath; if circumstances turn against her, she will use *dimension door*, *invisibility*, or other tricks to flee, returning when she has gathered her strength and her followers. It is possible that epic heroes could defeat the Daughters of Sora Kell, but it shouldn't be an easy task.

Next week -- details on the sisters ... and stats for Sora Maenya!

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## About the Author

Keith Baker has been an avid fan of **Dungeons & Dragons** since grade school. His life took a dramatic turn in 2002 when he submitted the world of Eberron to the WotC Fantasy Setting Search. In addition to developing the **Eberron** Campaign Setting and *Shadows of the Last War*, he has worked for Atlas Games, Goodman Games, and Green Ronin.

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